

## A DIRECTION FOR THE NEW YEAR

[jkroberts\\_us@yahoo.com](mailto:jkroberts_us@yahoo.com)

[www.pacolethillsbaptist.org](http://www.pacolethillsbaptist.org)

January 2, 2022 (service postponed)

Preached on January 9, 2022

Jeremiah 6:16-21

1. The nation of Judah was in decline when Jeremiah came on the scene.
2. A short-term revival had taken place under the leadership of King Josiah, but its impact was only temporary.
3. The people of Judah were involved in the outward exercise of religion, but their hearts were far from God.
4. God was about to use the nation of Babylon as an instrument of judgment against Judah.
5. Jeremiah was God's prophet just prior to and during Babylon's three sieges of Jerusalem.
6. His ministry was difficult because all aspects of society had turned away from the true worship of God. See Jeremiah 1:17-19  
"Now, gird up your loins and arise, and speak to them all which I command you. Do not be dismayed before them, or I will dismay you before them. 18 "Now behold, I have made you today as a fortified city and as a pillar of iron and as walls of bronze against the whole land, to the kings of Judah, to its princes, to its priests and to the people of the land. 19 "They will fight against you, but they will not overcome you, for I am with you to deliver you," declares the Lord."
7. The passage we are looking at today is applicable to us because there are many similarities between Judah in Jeremiah's day and the day in which we live.
8. Verse 16 contains some exhortations that we would do well to embrace as we enter into a new year.

### I. Stand by the ways and see.

- A. Here God told the people to take a stand or position from which they could see and consider the various ways or courses of life open to them.
- B. It is important to be an observer of life and to learn from what we see.
- C. Not all paths lead to where we really want to go.
  1. Proverbs 14:12-13  
There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. 13  
Even in laughter the heart may be in pain, and the end of joy may be grief.
  2. Matthew 7:13-14  
"Enter through the narrow gate; **for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.** 14 "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."
- D. A way or course of action may seem to hold great promise, but in the end it leads to disappointment, despair, disillusionment, defeat, and final destruction.

## II. And ask for the ancient paths where the good way is.

- A. As we examine the various options before us we are to ask for (inquire about or seek after) divine guidance and direction.
- B. We are to ask for, inquire about and seek after the ancient (old, perpetual, everlasting) paths.
  - 1. We need to understand that God does not change with the times and the fluctuating values and attitudes of this world.
  - 2. What pleased and displeased God in the past pleases and displeases Him in the present.
  - 3. God's will for His people is forever His will for His people.
- C. Notice that the ancient paths are synonymous with the good (pleasant, agreeable) way.
- D. The writer of Proverbs advised the following. Proverbs 3:5-6  
Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding.  
6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.
- E. The Psalmist manifested a proper attitude throughout the Psalms.
  - 1. Psalm 139:23-24  
Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts;  
24 and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.
  - 2. Psalm 143:8-10  
Let me hear Your lovingkindness in the morning; for I trust in You; teach me the way in which I should walk; for to You I lift up my soul. 9 Deliver me, O LORD, from my enemies; I take refuge in You. 10 Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

## III. And walk in it.

- A. It is not enough to know what constitutes the good way; we must also habitually walk in it.
- B. Notice that the people of Judah said, "We will not walk in it."
- C. Furthermore they refused to listen. v.17
- D. The Christian life is not just about a professed relationship.
- E. The New Testament clearly teaches that a genuine Christian will live a life that provides clear and observable evidence that he or she is in fact a child of God.

## IV. And you shall find rest (peace) for your souls.

- A. Jesus spoke similar words. Matthew 11:28-30  
"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29  
"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
- B. Is your soul at rest, and is your life characterized by peace of mind and heart?
- C. You and I can know the rest that God's Word is talking about if we will examine our ways and turn away from every path that is inconsistent with the ancient paths laid out for us in Scripture.
- D. Notice these words from Isaiah. Isaiah 30:15  
For thus the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, has said, "In repentance and rest you will be saved, in quietness and trust is your strength." **But you were not willing,**

## **APPLICATION**

1. In Isaiah God's way is referred to as, "The Highway of Holiness." Isaiah 35:8-10  
A highway will be there, a roadway, and it will be called the **Highway of Holiness**. The unclean will not travel on it, but it will be for him who walks that way, and fools will not wander on it. 9 No lion will be there, nor will any vicious beast go up on it; these will not be found there. But the redeemed will walk there, 10 and the ransomed of the LORD will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.
2. It is my prayer that we will all examine our ways in the light of what we know to be the will of God.
3. May we discover the ancient paths, where the good way is, and may we walk in it.
4. If we do our lives will be characterized by the peace and rest that goes with resolutely following the Lord.